

VIDEO AGE

international

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VIRTUAL TV TRADE SHOWS COMING SOON NEAR YOU

But traditional markets are on the rebound

BY DOM SERAFINI

This business prizes relationships above anything else, including content. It's not unusual for a TV outlet to acquire irrelevant programs just to keep relationships going. Conversely, a seller would reduce a buyer's debt load with the distributor to foster the relationship for the long run.

It is because of the importance of personal relationships that TV trade shows, such as MIP, NATPE and Asia TV Forum prosper. In effect, many medium-size and large program distributors keep sales offices in all key cities around the world; therefore, the need to meet in a far-away location would technically diminish if it weren't for this thing called "relationship."

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JAPAN: FROM NO-GLASSES 3D TO HOLOGRAPHIC TV

In addition to revitalizing its stagnant economy, Japan has two other challenges: High-definition three-dimensional TV without the need for special glasses, and holographic broadcasts.

Both projects have the same faithful deadline: December of this year. This month Toshiba will start marketing in Japan its 12 and 20-inch glasses-less stereoscopic (or 3-D) TV sets. Similarly, Nintendo plans to introduce a no-glasses 3-D version of its game console in February 2011.

Additionally, on December 2, 2010 FIFA will be awarding the 2022 World Cup games. If Japan wins the bid, the world could well be watching football matches as holographic broadcasts.

Basically, in addition to watching from living rooms and bars, fans can go to a nearby stadium and watch the game played out live as though the players were actually there. NHK, Japan's public broadcaster, has committed to creating the first holo-TV by 2016, well ahead of the 2022 Cup.

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IMPROVED ECONOMY MAKES ASIA TV MARKET A BETTER SHOWCASE

BY ERIN SOMERS

Ad spend in Asia is on the rise, and there has perhaps never been a better prospect for trade shows such as the Asia TV Forum (ATF) in Singapore.

As of the second quarter, research specialist Nielson reported positive trend figures across all 12 markets in the region, with a 15 percent gain in spending overall. On the eve of the 11th annual ATF, things seem to be looking up.

The market is set to kick off December 8-10 at the now traditional centrally-located Suntec Convention

Center. Last year, the event saw an eight percent increase in attendance from the previous year, with 740 companies from 53 countries and 312 buyers from 41 countries. This year, Asia's premier

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GERMAN SCREENINGS: AUSTRIA COULD OFFER REEL EDELWEISS

Outside Germany, the strength of the country's television public sector can certainly be gauged by an under-publicized and promoted event called the German Screenings.

Indeed, it's billed as "Germany's largest television trade fair." These annual Screenings for international program buyers bring together production and

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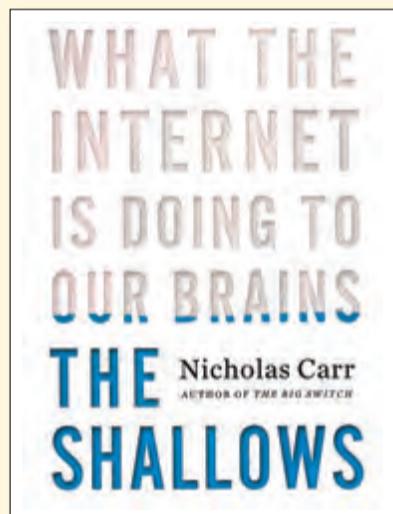
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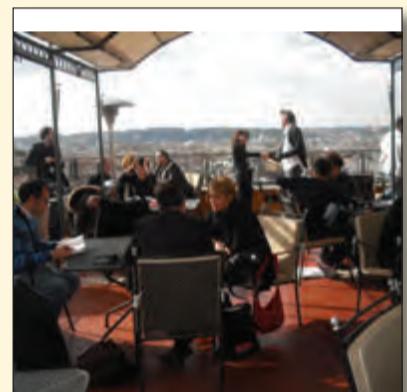


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TV Jornadas In Argentina

Jornadas Internacionales, Latin America's largest trade show on pay-TV and technologies, as usual drew the cable industry crowd from Argentina and throughout Latin America. The 20th edition of the annual event was held early last September at the Hilton Hotel

in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

The convention featured academic conferences and seminars about the regulatory framework, among other topics. Speakers included Horacio Rodríguez Larreta, City Cabinet Chief for Buenos Aires; Roberto Igarza, professor at the Universidad Austral; and Leonardo Calo, academic director of Señal Conexión Educativa for Red Intercable. There were 4,067 participants present at the event, which served as an international

conference and a market, as well as an exhibition of services, technologies and TV programming.

Companies in attendance included América TV, Germany's Deutsche Welle, Italy's Mediaset, Discovery Networks, Disney and ESPN, Fox Latin America Channels, HBO, Telefe, Televisa, and ARTEAR.

The event was organized by the Asociación Argentina de TV por Cable (ATVC) and Cámara de Productores y Programadores de Señales Audiovisuales (CAPPSSA). *Jornadas Internacionales* 2011 will take place September 21-23.

Pictured at the top right are (l. to r.): Alejandro Harrison, vice president of CAPPSSA; Horacio Rodríguez Larreta, City of Buenos Aires Cabinet Chief; Walter Burzaco, president of ATVC; Sergio Veiga, president of CAPPSSA, and Lucio Gamaleri, president of Asociación

Pampeana de TV por Cable.



Sport is Prince in Monaco

SportelMonaco ended October 14 on a higher note than last year as far as the number of stands were concerned (166 vs. 161), but with a lower number of participants (2,188 vs. 2,247) and companies (922 vs. 938). Of the 166 stands, 83 were actual booths.

It began on October 11, just two days after MIPCOM ended in nearby Cannes, forcing participants who attended both markets to hang around for the weekend. Perhaps the gap discouraged TV executives from staying longer on the Côte d'Azur.

In any case, the exhibit space in the Grimaldi Forum was filled and rather busy. This year's event also marked the end of William and Lilliane Vitale of the Vitale Organization's involvement with Sportel as its U.S. representative from New Jersey. Marie-Christine Ramazzotti was called on to take over sales and marketing, operating from Sportel headquarters in Monte Carlo.

The next SportelAsia event will be held in Hong Kong, March 16-18, 2011, and SportelMonaco will return to the Grimaldi Forum October 10-12, 2011.

Pictured below is Prince Albert of Monaco — who's also in charge of the Sportel organization — during his traditional visit to the stands, stopping to chat with RaiTrade's Massimo Migani, who donated to the prince the rose jersey signed by Giro d'Italia bicycle champ Ivan Basso.



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TV Still On Top Down Under

At least in Australia, people are watching as much television as they did before the Internet began to consume so much of their time. They're even watching TV programs downloaded from the Internet on their TVs rather than on their computers.

According to ratings agency OzTAM, the amount of time Australians spend watching TV has remained relatively stable, even with the advent of the Internet and other types of media. In 2005 Australians watched an average of three hours and 13 minutes of television every day. In 2006 that number was up four minutes to three hours and 17 minutes, and although the number dropped last year, thus far, in 2010 it is back up to three hours and 11 minutes. Television, according to Roy Morgan Research, dominates media consumption, comprising 41 percent of the total hours that the average Australian spends consuming any form of media weekly.

Advertisers, who once stayed spending, have recognized TV's resilience and are spending heavily once again. Australia's advertising downturn was less drastic than that of other countries, and advertising on the three commercial networks rebounded to A\$1.8 billion for the first half of 2010,

up 17 percent.

Thus, television is attracting the attention of media moguls like James D. Packer presumably because it is a medium that still offers a promising opportunity to make money.

After Packer sold his Nine TV Network and other media properties to CVC Asia Pacific for A\$4.6 billion in 2006, it seemed that TV in Australia was doomed. However, Packer's recent acquisition of 17.88 percent of Ten TV Network for A\$250 million points to one conclusion: television is still the medium of choice for Australian viewers.

Kerry Stokes controls 67.87 percent of Ten through his ACE Group. In 2006 Stokes launched a raid on Packer's pay-TV assets held through his Consolidated Media Holdings (CMH). Currently, Stokes owns 24.4 percent of CMH and Packer 49.67 percent. CMH owns 25 percent of pay-TV services Foxtel and Fox Sports.

Televisa's U.S. Target

Mexico's Televisa is expanding in the U.S. Spanish-language (Hispanic) market after signing a new deal with U.S. network Univision.

Televisa reported in early October that it was investing \$1.2 billion in debt-laden broadcaster Univision, a long-time partner that uses Televisa's programs to fill in most of its prime time schedule.

Under the new agreement, Univision will have unrestricted use of Televisa's content for television, Internet, video on demand and mobile phones. In exchange for the expanded rights and content, Televisa will receive larger royalties from Univision through December 2017. Currently, royalties amount to 9.36 percent of Univision's television revenue, excluding certain soccer events, but this will rise to 11.91 percent through 2017.

The Hispanic market has a purchasing power of \$1 trillion per year and advertisers are realizing the potential of this market, which should be reflected in Univision's revenue growth in the coming years.

In other news, Televisa posted a nine percent rise in third-quarter net earnings on higher sales driven by World Cup advertising and paid cable and satellite television services. Televisa's broadcast television revenues could now grow up to six percent this year, up slightly from a previous estimate of five percent.

Subs, Yes. Murdoch, No

The U.K.'s BSkyB inched closer to its target of 10 million subs as it added 96,000 subscribers in the first three months of its financial year. The satcaster's customer base stood at 9.956 million TVHH at the end of September, and it wants to hit the 10 million target, set in 2004 (when subscriber numbers were at 7.4 million), by the end of this year.

The satcaster also saw a 39 percent increase in the number of subs who take TV, broadband and telephone services from it — a total of 2.3 million customers. The pay-television operator has attracted customers to its HD services after cutting installation prices for set-top boxes. BSkyB reported that 32 percent of its customers now subscribe to its HD service. In addition, it has recently expanded its channel offerings, after buying Living TV, and will launch a new channel — Sky Atlantic HD — in early 2011.

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But, since the satcaster may not set a further subscribers growth target after 2010 as the pay-TV market matures, BSkyB may shift its focus to selling more products to its existing customers once the 10 million subs target has been reached.

The climb in the number of subs came as BSkyB posted a 25 percent rise in operating profits in the three months leading up to September to £255 million and a 15 percent increase in revenues to £1.53 billion.

There are no new developments with

BSkyB's board's rebuff last June of a proposal by Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation to take full control of the U.K. satellite broadcaster. Murdoch offered 700 pence a share for the 61 percent of BSkyB that News Corp does not currently own, thus valuing the satcaster at just over £12 billion. BSkyB said the proposal significantly undervalued the business and called for an offer in excess of 800 pence a share.

Meanwhile, U.K. media groups such as the *Daily Mail*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Guardian* and *Daily Mirror* — together with executives at BBC, Channel 4 and BT — joined forces to launch an assault on Murdoch's move, petitioning Business Secretary Vince Cable to consider blocking the plans, fearing that such a deal would pose a threat to competition and media plurality. The proposed £7.8 billion takeover bid for the U.K.'s largest pay-television operator will be considered by Cable based on legal grounds. News

Corp is scheduled to formally notify the European Commission in the "near term." Reportedly, BSkyB spent £2 million on advisory fees during the three-month period that ended Sept. 30.

KCET's BP Money Spill

KCET, the PBS TV affiliate in Los Angeles, will exit PBS effective Jan. 1, 2011. The move leaves the nation's second-largest TV market without a flagship public television station and represents the first defection of a major market station from the national public TV network.

For KCET, the PBS affiliation fee had become too expensive, mainly due to the

success of its preschool programming that generated more donations and grants for the L.A. TV station, including \$25 million from oil giant BP paid out over several years, with another \$25 million coming from First 5 California (the state children's commission created from cigarette taxes) and at least one anonymous donor.

In gratitude, KCET executives renamed their historic Sunset Boulevard soundstage BP Studios.

The grants, however, came with the stipulation that they could not be used for administrative costs; therefore, even though the station was flush with money, KCET could use none of it to settle its account with PBS.

According to KCET officials — who appealed to PBS for lower dues — the station was being penalized for producing high-quality and popular programming, especially with its preschool shows. Plus, when KCET dues were at the highest, its revenue sources were decreasing.

Facing another bill this coming January for six months' worth of dues, or more than \$3 million, KCET officials proposed that the outlet become a "secondary" PBS station. They offered to pay PBS \$1.3 million. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting, which disburses federal funds to public broadcasting stations, would kick in an additional \$750,000. PBS officials, wanting KCET to remain the area's flagship station, rejected the proposal, arguing that the L.A. TV station was asking for special treatment and pointed out that although the BP grants had hiked KCET's dues, the station had also received a larger appropriation from the federal government.

Meanwhile, as BP was grappling last summer with the Gulf of Mexico oil spill that badly tarnished its reputation, the BP Studios sign became an embarrassment on the KCET lot. Reportedly, several KCET show guests asked about that sign, which became a problem for the station from a public relations standpoint. Earlier this year, KCET officials discreetly covered up the sign.

Letters

[*VideoAge*] September/October Issue at MIPCOM is the best one yet. Congratulations.

Farrell E. Meisel, Los Angeles

Famous quotes:

"Time Warner needed to do something more visionary: Separate the distribution of media from its creation — thereby reversing the conventional wisdom behind two decades of media industry thinking."

Royal Television Society's Television magazine interview with Time Warner's Jeff Bewkes

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How the Internet Is Changing Our Brains

No question about it—the Internet has made communication and intellectual pursuit far more simple and efficient than it once was. The evidence is everywhere.

But has all this come at a price? Are we losing something in exchange for these conveniences? Are we changing the way we think?

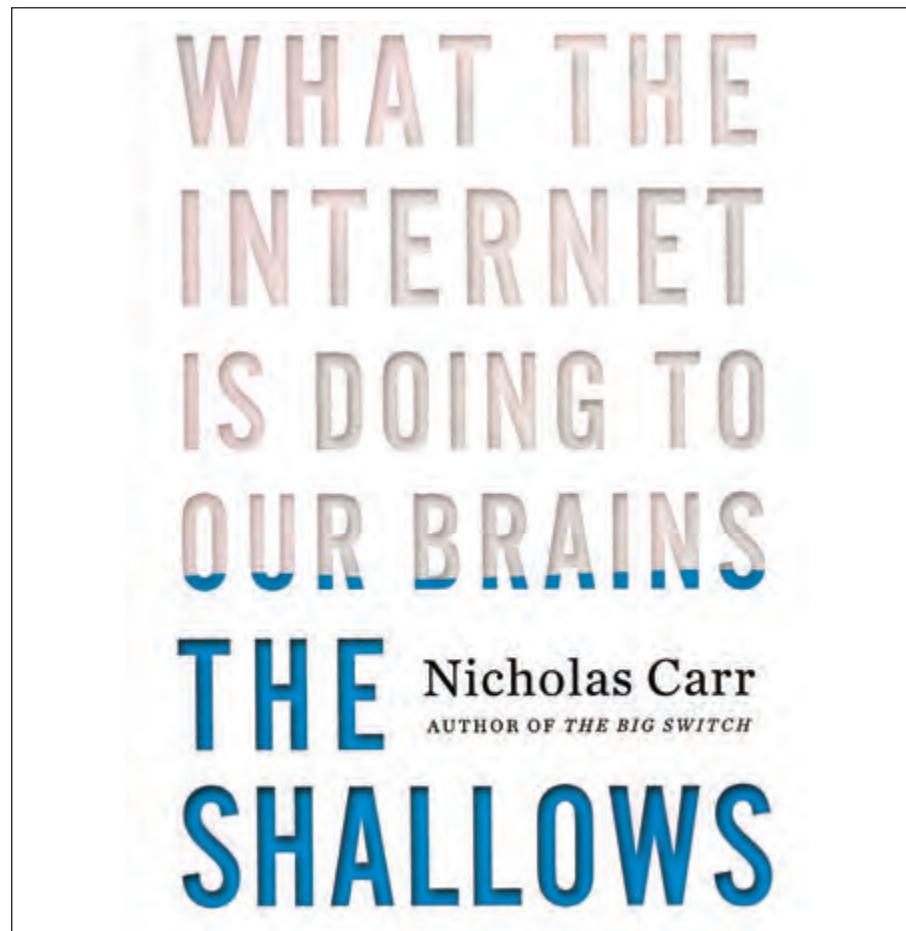
A technology writer for publications such as *The New York Times Magazine*, Nicholas Carr responds to these inquiries with a resounding “Yes” in *The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains* (W.W. Norton & Company, 276 pages, \$26.95). Carr argues that the Internet, like other technologies, is slowly changing the way we think. It is rewiring our brains, building new neural pathways to replace those we no longer use. The Internet, he claims, is threatening to diminish our humanness, namely the ability to think and feel deeply.

Naturally, every new technology has its critics. The television, telephone and telegraph did not escape naysayers. Neither did books, which Socrates criticized for fostering forgetfulness.

Nonetheless, Carr provides the reader with lessons in history and science that are truly fascinating. Our brains, he teaches readers, are capable of adapting to “even small shifts in our circumstances and behavior,” and therefore are capable of changing as the result of our Internet use. The repetition of our actions on the Internet leads our brains to create new synapses, new firing routes, for our neurons. Thus, our brains come to expect a speedy source of information that they can sample quickly as we navigate from link to link and online page to online page.

It follows, therefore, that the Internet is altering the circuitry in our brains. Other technologies have, too: the clock made us perceive time differently; the advent of books fostered what Carr calls “deep reading.” Carr makes the case that all technological advances have influenced the way we think and the way our minds work.

In fact, the author contends, “the Net delivers precisely the kind of sensory and cognitive stimuli — repetitive, intensive, interactive, addictive — that have been shown to result in strong and rapid alterations in brain circuits and functions.” I’m sure that most of us who use the Internet feel, in some way, that our habits are changing (we check our e-mail constantly to see if new messages have arrived, we skim the contents of



pages we click on), which suggests that our very wiring is changing as well.

Even though most would agree that Google and other search engines are extremely helpful tools, Carr argues that search engines lead to fragmented thinking. When we search the Web, we remain on the surface of the depths of knowledge that we could immerse ourselves in, if only we could stop our fingers from clicking on page after page, and our eyes from skimming the electronic text for key information.

In addition, Carr argues that the Internet is destroying our attention spans and making it more difficult for us to concentrate. He cites his own experience, as well as the experiences of university professors, who find reading books a waste of valuable time that they could spend browsing the Net for the same information. Since neuroplasticity allows our brains to develop space for new skills, replacing the space once allotted for skills we no longer use, Carr argues that “the Net seems to be...chipping away my capacity for concentration and contemplation.” He continues, “Whether I’m online or not, my mind now expects to take in information the way the Net distributes it: in a swiftly moving stream of particles.”

Clicking and scrolling on the Internet requires less concentration than does reading printed words and turning pages, and hyperlinks even distract us from the page we’re reading, leading us to new pages and ideas. It is a distressing reality that when we go online, which we do with ever-increasing frequency, “we enter an environment that promotes cursory reading, hurried and distracted thinking, and superficial learning.”

While the author has a valid point, and most readers would probably agree that the Internet plays a vigorous game of tug-of-war with their attention, pulling it in various directions, Carr’s contention that he feels its effects outside the distracted environment of the Web may be an overstatement.

I admit that while I’m online, I’m as distracted as the next person. As Carr notes, distractions become more distracting when our brains are overloaded with information, the way they are when we go online. But when I disconnect, I find that, unlike Carr, I am still able to engage with books and articles. I don’t become antsy after reading four paragraphs as Carr suggests many people do. However, the author has convinced me that some degree of change is taking

place inside my brain; that the “linear mind is being pushed aside by a new kind of mind that wants and needs to take in...information in short, disjointed...bursts—the faster, the better.”

Overall, Carr suggests that, even though the Internet is undoubtedly a useful tool, it may be slowly robbing us of our humanness, causing us to “sacrifice the very qualities that separate us from machines.” He argues that when we use a technology to amplify a particular part of our bodies, we distance our brains from that body function, numbing a part of ourselves. The Internet’s rewiring of our brains may prevent us from thinking deeply and relating to others, as deep thinking and empathy require more time and mental processing. He cites an experiment performed by Antonio Damasio, director of USC’s Brain and Creativity Institute, whose results confirm that “the more distracted we become, the less able we are to experience the subtlest, most distinctively human forms of empathy, compassion, and other emotions.” Indeed, an unsettling thought.

The author’s strength — providing interesting and colorful anecdotes that bring historical figures and science to life — is also his weakness, as he allows the history and science lessons to continue for too long, and doesn’t sufficiently tie his argument into the anecdotes he provides. While reading, I often felt that Carr integrated the very hyperlinks he charges with distracting our attention on the Internet into the pages of his own book. Yes, I learned interesting facts about the clock and the map, Nietzsche and Turing, but these facts distract from his overall argument. These distractions, which even include four sections titled “a digression,” continue until (and after) page 115, when Carr returns from his wanderings and sufficiently reminds readers of his thesis: The Internet is diminishing our ability to think deeply.

I began to wonder if Carr intended to distract his readers in an attempt to mimic the influence the Internet has over our brains; however, he states that he “tended to write [this book] in disconnected spurts.” Thus, perhaps the book reads disjointedly because Carr wrote it in a disjointed fashion.

Does this mean that Carr’s brain functions in a disconnected, distracted manner due to the amount of time he spends on the Internet? I’m not sure, but I do know that Carr’s writing is frustrating for readers who attempt to consume the book as a coherent whole with substantiating arguments and evidence that support a clear thesis.

Carr has a valid point, and it is important that he make us aware that the way we spend our time impacts our mental functions, and even the very makeup of our brains.

But will his book change our reliance on the Internet? Probably not, because for most of us, its practical benefits — convenience, ease and speed in finding information and reaching out to others — are much more real than the changes in our brains’ circuitry, which, despite Carr’s illustration in this book, we simply cannot see. Carr acknowledges that, “The Internet doesn’t change our intellectual habits against our will. But change them it does.” It’s not difficult to see that it already has. **SA**

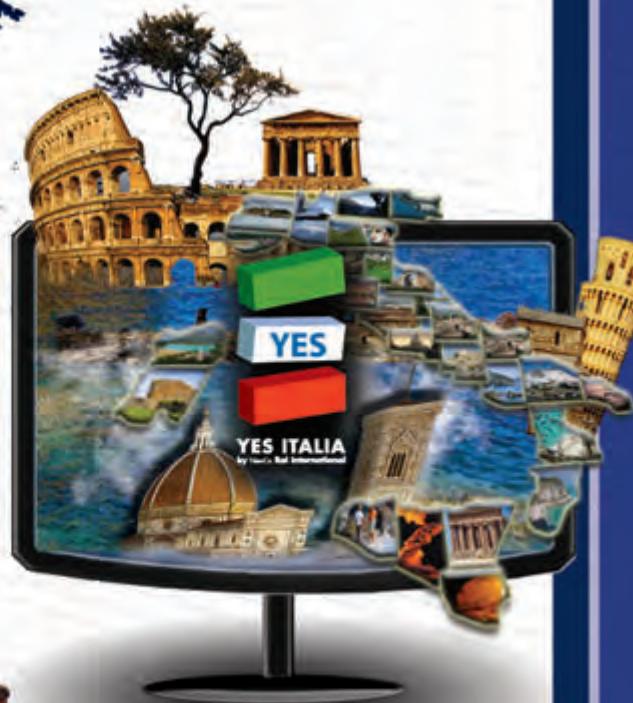
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Dancing to the Tune of Sales In the Convention's Aisles

One thing was for sure at MIPCOM 2010: Extravagance was back. Big parties, bigger stands, large crowds and even fireworks on opening night. After a few quiet MIPCOM markets, the celebrations were in full swing at the convention center, on yachts and in the clubs and restaurants of Cannes, interrupted only by the deluge of a storm on day one, which soon subsided to gloriously sunny and hot summer-like days.

This year's edition of the global content market took place early in October in its traditional venue, the Palais des Festivals, and in addition to the preponderance of parties, there was also, by all accounts, an abundance of deals.

According to organizer Reed Midem's director of Television Laurine Garaude, the 26th iteration of the convention saw an increase in attendance, with 12,000 participants representing over 100 countries, and 1,700 exhibitors catering to 4,000 buyers.

The theme was "Redefining the Entertainment Experience," which clearly required some explanation. In the end, it meant that the panels, seminars and sessions were all about looking into a crystal ball and projecting the future of



Luke Perry was in Cannes to promote eOne's Goodnight For Justice

the TV biz. In addition to the theme, the focus was on Australia, and a number of activities geared towards Aussie content and finding co-production partners Down Under were sprinkled throughout the week.

Business began even before the market officially opened, with MIPJunior, which kicked off two days prior to the main event. Organizers reported 470 buyers from 50 countries and 900 distributors from 55 countries were in attendance at the kids focused mini-



Eric Balfour and Emily Rose of eOne's Haven

market. Highlights included a keynote from *Hannah Montana* mastermind Michael Poryes, as well as the Kid's Jury Screening, which challenged producers to have their work critiqued by a panel of pint-sized judges.

Day One shed some light on the dilemma of state subsidies. The issue of whether rebates from the government (and ultimately, the tax payers) is a viable system was tackled in the Production Incentives in France seminar. Day Two was, as previously mentioned, dedicated



Endemol's Hot in Cleveland's Wendy Malick, Valerie Bertinelli, Jane Leeves

to Australia. Gregor Jordan, director of feature *Ned Kelly* gave a keynote, which was followed by the Spotlight on Australia Lunch and the "Working with Australia Workshop and Matchmaking Event." Other sessions of note included Day Three's "Online Video: To Pay or Not To Pay?" which asked whether the future of Web video content will be ad-based, subscription-based or a hybrid model.

Lionsgate CEO Jon Feltheimer was the man of the hour. On the evening of Day Two he was honored as MIPCOM's prestigious Personality of the Year. In addition to Feltheimer's keynote address and gala celebration, Lionsgate was also the star of the World Premiere TV Screening, which featured two of its series, popular drama *Mad Men* and brand new comedy *Running Wilde*.

Press conferences and announcements abounded. At FremantleMedia's Day One breakfast, the company revealed that it acquired a 60 percent stake in global transmedia company @Radical, with which it has collaborated on a number of projects in the past, including table tennis tournament *Hardbat Classic* and *Iconoclasts*, *Britney: For the Record*. Fremantle CEO David Ellender was also on hand to announce the launch of major

(Continued on Page 14)



Different kind of above the line star: No Ordinary Family's executive producer Greg Berlanti on call at Disney's stand



Robert Redford, Jon Hamm and Elisabeth Moss made an appearance in Cannes. Redford announced the launch of the Sundance Channel in France, the Netherlands and South Korea. *Mad Men's* Jon Hamm and Elisabeth Moss attended a premiere screening of their show



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MIPCOM [Continued]

(Continued from Page 12)



MIPCOM was indeed a red-carpet showcase

new drama series *Killing Time* as well as 17 upcoming pilots for U.S. cable stations.

Disney Media Networks hosted a Day One luncheon, where president of Global Distribution Ben Pyne unveiled a raft of deals. Among them was a multi-year free TV output deal with Spain's Antena 3, which will see the broadcaster become the exclusive first run free home of all Disney features beginning in 2011.

As the market wound down, talk on the convention floor turned to the next events coming down the pike. The German Screenings is on deck, taking place in Salzburg, Austria November 28-December 2. Austrian public broadcaster ORF will play host, and, revealed executives from three of the six participating companies at an informal MIPCOM meeting, up to 200 buyers are expected from around the globe.

The Asia TV Forum, which will kick off in Singapore December 8-10, got its fair share of buzz as well, with distributors from around the world



Lionsgate's Kevin Beggs was also the star of the World Premiere TV Screening, which featured two of Lionsgate's series, drama *Mad Men* and new comedy *Running Wilde*

expressing excitement at the growing potential of the region. And of course, the Latins were gearing up for January's NATPE in Miami Beach, Florida. This



Perhaps taking advantage of the improved economic climate, Spain's RTVE, in addition to its shows, put the country's wine on sale



AETN's Gene Simmons of the rock band Kiss promoting his new A&E reality show *Gene Simmons Family Jewels* (Photo by C360Media/Image&Co.)

NATPE organizers for what promises to be a great Miami event. The large Latin contingent clearly demonstrated that MIPCOM has now become the region's third largest TV trade show after NATPE and the L.A. Screenings.

If one can gauge a market's success by the number of film and TV stars in attendance, MIPCOM 2010 was a winner. Robert Redford made an appearance at a Rainbow Media press luncheon at the Carlton Hotel to announce the launch of the Sundance Channel in France, the Netherlands and South Korea. *Mad Men*'s Jon Hamm and Elisabeth Moss were at the Lionsgate screening, and Gene Simmons of the rock band Kiss was on the premises promoting his new A&E reality show *Gene Simmons Family Jewels*. Sarah Jessica Parker made the rounds on behalf of FremantleMedia's *Work of Art: The Next Great Artist*. Plus, representing new Entertainment One series were Andrew Lincoln and Sarah Wayne Callies from zombie show *The Walking Dead*, as well as *Goodnight for Justice*'s Luke Perry and Eric Balfour and Emily Rose of *Haven*. All this in addition to the market's biggest star, which was, as usual, program sales. ●



FME's David Ellender (l.) and Jeff Tahler (r.) with Sarah Jessica Parker and Alison Benson, promoting Benson and Parker's *Work of Art: The Next Great Artist*



Sarah Wayne Callies and Andrew Lincoln from eOne's *The Walking Dead*

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Film Market Facing The Hard Biz Facts

Inevitably, at the end of every American Film Market (AFM) the outcome comes down to numbers and figures and dollars and cents. This 31st edition was not an exception: 427 films screened from most of the 330 exhibitors — if one eliminates banks, financial companies and trade publications among the companies — with suites.

Naturally, a good number of smaller distributors participated without exhibiting, simply hanging around the lobby of the Loews Hotel in Santa Monica, the market headquarters, where no registration badge was required. Companies could also register as "Exhibitor without office," for \$3,500, which included four badges that allowed executives access to all floors.

The number of buyers reached 1,417 and the market organizer, the Los Angeles-based Independent Film & Television Alliance (IFTA), was keen to publicize its survey that more than 20 percent of buying companies at the AFM didn't go to the Cannes Film Festival. Buyers were required to pay for their badges, which cost about \$500 each, compared to \$800 for the seller's badge.

But, even though the trade event was billed as a theatrical market, television sales (especially for the digital channels) and the VoD window followed by DVD sales dominated the film market business, with theatrical sales a distant third.



eOne's Valerie Cabrera

The Roma Cinema Fest (RCF) in Rome, Italy, ended November 5, and continued to have a negative impact on the AFM as far as Italian distribution companies were concerned. With the advent of the RCF, now in its fifth year, the number of Italian companies exhibiting at the AFM has been reduced to one. However, some Italian buyers still patronized the Santa Monica market.

Reportedly, the U.S. Embassy in Rome called the Italian Trade Commission to encourage the Italian buyers to participate in the AFM. A mini-controversy erupted when a "rumor" was circulated at the RCF that many French buyers would not be at the AFM. This rumor was, in

part, confirmed by a *Screen International* article indicating that "Several French sales companies under the Unifrance umbrella" were not working out of the Loews, but at the nearby Hamilton Galleries. However, AFM managing director Jonathan Wolf dismissed the controversy by providing *VideoAge* with the list of pre-registered French buyers that listed 28 companies with 66 buyers.

Another problem was that there was very little independent product around, with most good titles coming from the so-called mini-majors, which tend to pre-sell movies. But, the fact that the pre-sale market has slowed down has somewhat helped the AFM. Among the



D3 Telefilm's Cord Douglas, Samantha Gallagher

indie product there was the distributors' so-called "bread 'n butter:" movies in the \$1.5 million rage very popular with the U.S. cable TV networks, that travel well internationally (but not in Canada, if not made with several Canadian components).

In addition, most indie product was made up of DVD titles for a sector that, unfortunately, is in crisis. The VoD market was certainly active, especially with the 50-50 revenue share business model, often without advances. This is something that troubled distributors because it indicates that the TV outlet will not pay sufficient attention (i.e., give a good position on the schedule) to the product. Asking for VoD rights were not only DVD companies, but also free-to-air TV outlets, which prompted an exhibitor to comment, "It's becoming complicated."

AFM organizers did a good job of trying to match buyers and sellers, especially with their "Breakfast Initiative," consisting of morning gatherings for buyers with IFTA's member sellers, which spanned five days. This in addition to a buyers-sellers online social network service called "MyAFM."

This is because AFM is a market where most buyers do not pre-schedule meetings any longer, favoring instead walk-ins in order to be more flexible with the general screenings (which are held at various theaters scattered throughout the beach town). The AFM utilized 21 commercial

(Continued on Page 18)



RHI's John Alexander



The "super" Starz girls, l.to.r., Kristen Stanisz, Cynthia Burnett, Alisha Serold, Amy Beerup

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(Continued from Page 16)



Opus' Ken DuBow

screens, of which eight were digital. Of these, four screens were equipped for 3D and a reported 21 movies were in the 3D format. Screenings were only available to exhibitors and fees for each screening ranged from \$215 for video, \$1,080 for 35 mm film, \$2,240 for 2K digital or 3D.

The conference part of the eight-day market that started November 3 included seminars that examined film financing, social media, distribution, piracy and marketing, for a total of 12 sessions held at Le Merigot Hotel and Fairmont Miramar Hotel, with each priced at \$40 to \$95.

The Hong Kong film industry took the spotlight on November 4 with a Hong Kong Day, which included a seminar, screenings of six films and a cocktail reception.

In terms of the outlook for the event, being a pure trade market, the AFM doesn't have a real competitor, since other film events are mainly festivals with a business component. However, the AFM strongly competes against its calendar date, which falls right at the end of budget cycles, when money becomes scarce and, if

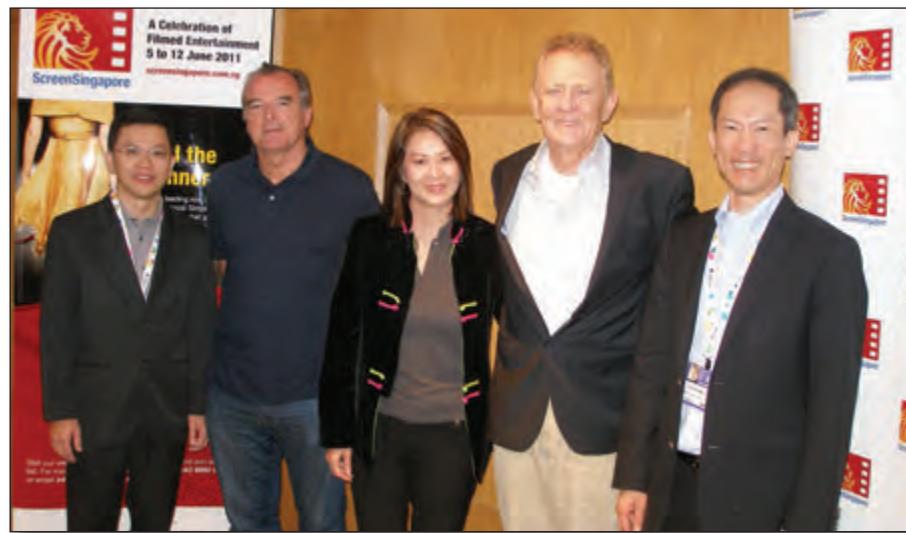
buyers spot a good movie, they are forced to ask for an "extra budget." In addition, the AFM also competes with television markets such as MIPCOM, which precedes the AFM and is increasingly becoming an all-encompassing entertainment trade show, and the ups and downs of television windows with what always seems to end up as a zero sum game.

In terms of efficiency, with 330 sellers and over 660 buying companies, the market's seller-to-buyer ratio is considered good. Another positive is the cost efficiency factor, with rates for exhibition suites starting at \$5,825, plus a \$3,500 exhibition fee (for non-IFTA members) for the less desirable rooms.

A suite on the more trafficked floors such as the ones above the fourth floor (which is the lobby area) and especially those near the front, by the stairs and elevators, can go for as much as \$18,000 per room for IFTA members (affiliate members pay annual dues of \$4,000) and much higher for non members. This means that an exhibitor can recoup market costs by selling one film to a "good-sized territory." In comparison to other film-TV markets outside the U.S., the AFM is considered a relatively inexpensive market, even including hotel accommodations, especially for overseas participants who can take advantage of the low dollar exchange rate.

And this is one aspect that primarily redeems the AFM: an affordable, low-risk market and an enviable U.S. location for participants. In addition, it is a good source of revenue for IFTA, which is estimated to be netting over \$2 million from the proceeds (or about 20 percent of total revenues): A sum sufficient for not trying to fiddle with such things as changing the AFM to a spring date, which could be beneficial to the exhibitors, but risky for the organizer.

In 2011, AFM dates are set for November 2-9. ●



Screen Singapore was announced for June 5-12, 2011. From l. to r. MDA's new CEO Aubeck Kam, Screen Singapore's Dennis Davidson, MDA's Cassandra Tay, Screen Singapore's Gregory Coote, former MDA CEO and current Minister of Information Senior Advisor Christopher Chia

Rome Film Fest Doesn't Feast on Biz

The Roma Cinema Fest (RCF) opened its fifth edition in Rome, Italy on October 28 under surreal circumstances. Some 1,500 Italian film industry people took over the red carpet to demonstrate against the Italian government's cut in film subsidies. The fact that it was staged on the opening night of a film festival that was a pure political creation, financed with local government money, rendered the whole situation surreal.

The Italian film industry is also a political creation, supported with state money, which assures that producers make money even before the films are released. Few incentives go toward exports and producers are mostly not interested in foreign sales, as their absence at the AFM clearly demonstrated.

The RCF was created by politicians from the left with the clear intention of harming the more established, but right-leaning Venice Film Festival. However, it hasn't been able to develop a successful business side or to attract significant international film buyers.

The so-called "business" aspect of the RCF revolved around three hotels: the Bernini Bristol, which headquartered the event, the Majestic and the Marriott Flora, which housed approximately 10 seminars/workshops, including a seminar organized by *Variety* on Film Journalism in the Digital World and a forum on Strategy and Finance for Cinema organized by Media Consulting Group.

Indeed, RCF's "Business Street" was



just a room with a scenic terrace on the eighth floor of the Bernini Bristol hotel with several tables where unidentified sellers hoped to meet some unidentified buyers.

Even though participants conversed in English and other foreign lingo, Italian was the dominant language, indicating that business contacts were made mostly among Italian companies — which are overwhelmingly located in Rome. According to official figures, there were 309 buyers, of which 187 were foreign and 122 Italian. A total of 67 film distribution companies "exhibited" at the event. Officially, some "792 accredited participants," took part in the "Business Street," but the only aspect that resembled a market was the controlled circulation of a few trade publications, consisting of: *VideoAge*, *Cinema&Video*, *Les Film Francais* and *Screen International*.

The RCF's "Business Street" also operated under the unrealistic premise of theatrical business, thus ignoring the fact that such titles are sold even before the films are completed, and the competitive component of the Festival does not expose "rough theatrical gems," like TIFF and Sundance Festival do. The "Street" closed on November 1, while the competition ended in a different section of Rome with the assignments of the Marc'Aurelio and other awards on November 5. ●



NATPE 2011
How Do You Expect To Reach Latin Buyers
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VideoAge Monthly



Latin American TV seen through the eyes of caudillo Angel Gonzalez

By DOM SERAFINI
For someone who shuns the limelight, doesn't give interviews, doesn't want his picture taken and protects his privacy with zeal, Remigio Angel Gonzalez y Gonzalez is, surprisingly, an open book. The Mexican-born, Miami, Florida resident is president and owner of Albavision, a Miami-based group that controls 26 TV stations in 10 Latin American countries, 21 of which it owns while the rest are affiliated for programming. Albavision also controls 82 radio stations (25 of which are owned and operated) and 40 movie theaters (Cine Alba) in Guatemala and Costa Rica.

To the international TV distribution industry, Albavision is merely seen as an entity worth an estimated \$14 million per year for program acquisitions, but to the



(Continued on Page 24)

NATPE Visual, Vision Struggle

The theme of NATPE 2010 — being held January 25-27 at the Mandalay Bay Resort in Las Vegas — is "Content, Commerce, Connections." Thus, there seems to be a great deal of focus and optimism in regard to the future of the television business heading into this year's NATPE. Not only is the landscape changing in terms of the digital content world (something that will be highlighted in a number of panels and events), the actual logistics of the event have shifted as well. 2010 marks the first year that NATPE will be a predominantly suite-based exhibition. *VideoAge* weighed in with a number of industry participants.

For the most part, people seem optimistic about the shift. Bender Media Services is certainly happy that it will be an almost all-suite exhibition, as it will be easier for our buyers to be primarily in one location for the three-day event," commented Susan Bender. Marcel Vinay, Jr. of Comaxx felt similarly, saying, "We have been in a suite for a long time. The benefit will be to our clients, since they

(Continued on Page 28)



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German Screenings

(Continued from Cover)

distribution organizations associated with Germany's most powerful regional and national public broadcasters.

Now in its 35th year, the itinerant German Screenings will be held at the Sheraton hotel in Salzburg, Austria, November 28-December 2. Previous recent editions were held in Munich (2009) and Hamburg (2008).

This year, Austrian public broadcaster ORF sponsors the event, and five German distributors—Deutsche Welle, Studio Hamburg, Telepool, Bavaria Media and United Docs—exhibit.

Upwards of 200 buyers are expected to participate, and though attendance will be largely European, a small Latin American delegation will also be on hand, including representatives from Brazil's Globosat. All are paying their own expenses.

Overall, it is expected that more than 100 new program titles in seven categories, including feature films and children's shows, will be screened during the five-day event, which could break records for both aspects of the market: the number of new titles and buyers.

To the world, Salzburg is known as the birthplace of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and because of the 1965 20th Century Fox film *The Sound of Music*. Which is to say, it's a fascinating place whose only drawback for some international buyers is that the airport has limited international flights. An alternative could be to land in Munich, Germany, and then make the 115 km, 90-minute long trip by the hourly train.

An executive from one of the exhibiting companies outlined the aims of the Screenings thus: "The German Screenings are the largest, leading trade event for German-language



Bavaria Media's Helge Koehnen, Nina Seidel, Stefanie Fritz, Bojan Ritan

programming. Thanks to its down-to-business focus on content, along with its personal and efficient atmosphere, the Screenings are held in high esteem by buyers worldwide and have become indispensable."

VideoAge caught up with four of the companies screening to find out what product they are presenting and what titles they predict will make a splash at the market.

Christiane Wittich, head of international sales for Studio Hamburg called the Screenings "a very important international market towards the end of each year." She elaborated, "All our European customers are concentrated on screening each company's portfolio intensely. Professionally they can decide right away—yes or no."

The Studio Hamburg team will screen a host of new titles, including *Aghet*, *Eichmann's Fate*, and *Children of Blankenese*, all of which launched at MIPCOM. Wittich also highlighted *Soul of a Century*, which she described as, "A collection of homemade movies, amateur films and footage material, and uncensored films of the 20th century, preserving the collective memory of people in Europe." Where series are concerned, the company will be bringing the second season of *Katja Stein*, a family-oriented romantic comedy centered on a teacher's professional and personal life.

Meanwhile, Deutsche Welle's European Distribution executive Aleksandra Jovanic plans to use the Screenings to "highlight some of [the company's] great new documentaries that cover a wide range of topics from global and ecological challenges to fascinating scientific research and history." Titles topping Deutsche Welle's slate include global warming doc *Global Ideas* and social, political and ecological piece *Acting Today for a Better Tomorrow*.

Unlike most of the companies, which have been attending the event since its inception, Deutsche Welle has screened product at the conference for six years. "[The event] provides a great atmosphere to not only present our new material to our long-standing partners, but also to get input on what each of their markets is looking for in terms of new programming," said Jovanic. She added that over the past few years, the firm has also worked to create tailored packages for different regions, and that this year, she expects popular lifestyle show *euromaxx* to be a top seller.

Bavaria Media was one of the founding members of the German Screenings, and according to director of Sales Helge Koehnen, the market is still the most important after MIP and MIPCOM. He remarked, "The advantages are that clients can take time to actually screen and decide on the spot. There is a relaxed atmosphere, but it's also very efficient as they can choose from our new titles as well as browse our back catalogue to find something that fits their needs. By screening the titles, they can get a clear picture of the general quality of German-language programming."

Koehnen was confident that this year's edition will be a success. "This year, we see that the channels do need new programming," he said. "And we are confident that they are willing to commit themselves to acquire titles that they are in need of." Bavaria Media's roster is made up of TV movies including *A Perfect Day For Love* and event miniseries like historical drama *Henry of Navarre*. Asked what programming he thinks will comprise the company's top seller, Koehnen pointed to romantic series and telenovelas.



Deutsche Welle's Ulrich Wartmann, Aleksandra Jovanic

Irina Ignatiew, executive vice president, International for Munich-based Telepool noted that her company's entire catalogue will be on offer. "Telepool's lineup covers a vast and varied panoply of programming," she said. "From high quality event movies and feature films to hit primetime series and award-winning docs." Ignatiew went on to elaborate that despite the financial crisis, she expects to see a lively demand for fictional content, especially tried and tested series like *Lasko* and *Alarm for Cobra 11*. Telepool's slate is rounded out by epic series, an adaptation of Grimm's classic fairy tales and a duo of docs centered on Islam.

Ignatiew also pointed out a major challenge exhibitors face this year. "With increased digitalization we are seeing increased market fragmentation and diversification," she said. "Small Web companies are gaining shares on the majors." For its part, Telepool is tackling the problem by focusing on "winning new clientele, tailoring unique custom packages, offering new formats and making use of online marketing and online distribution channels." Where the latter strategy is concerned, the company has launched a new Web-based distribution channel called Telepool Content Platform, which, noted Ignatiew, she's hoping to turn her customers on to. **ES**



ORF's Sabine Gruber, Monika Kossits, Beatrice Riesenfelder, Berend Dreier, Armin Luttenberger



Studio Hamburg's Gerd Richter-Kiewning, Christiane Wittich

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Asia Market A Better Showcase

(Continued from Cover)

conference for content for TV, mobile and a variety of other platforms is hoping for even bigger crowds.

Rob Gilby, senior vice president and managing director, Disney Media Distribution Asia Pacific, offered up a very positive perspective of the region. "In 2010, Asia became the largest TV market by numbers in the world, with over 50 percent of global TV households," he said. "Even though revenues are still less than those in developed Western markets, almost all markets in Asia Pacific offer significant growth potential."

Accordingly, the Disney team will be using ATF as an opportunity to showcase upcoming content, including locally relevant programming, and as Gilby put it, "To exchange ideas and share perspectives regarding our industry."

Although the outlook for Asia may be rosy, the region is not without its challenges. Robert Chua, chairman of Hong Kong-based Health and Lifestyle Channel highlighted a few stumbling blocks: "The Asian market is faced with low production budgets for shows. With too many TV channels chasing the same advertising dollars, the result is smaller budgets and lower quality programs. Additionally, there are too few original shows and too many copy cats." Chua also remarked that Western content does not fare as well as localized programming, which is why formats have taken off. Overall, however, Chua was buoyant. "Generally the economy in Asia has rebounded," he said. "Therefore most territories are doing fairly well."

Seoul-based Korea Creative Content



Singapore public officials paying a visit to the Italian ATF Pavilion

Agency (KOCCA) will be sending a delegation of South Korean companies who will be headquartered at its national pavilion. KOCCA was established by the government for the purpose of promoting culture within the country, and focuses on, among other things, technical development, production/distribution and strengthening international business relationships. Choon Keun Lee, the organization's executive director outlined KOCCA's plans for the ATF thus: "To get different audiences from around the world to notice outstanding Korean content."

The firm is bringing a slew of programming to the market, including a number of 3D titles, but Lee noted, "The romantic comedies are what we are most confident about." Among KOCCA's top titles, Lee pointed to KBS-produced comedy *Mary Is Out At Night* (working title) and MBC drama *Queen of Reversal* as possible winners. Asked how Korea fits into the Asian TV industry, Lee remarked, "In the past few years, Korean drama has been some of the most sought after content. Asian audiences still appreciate well-made dramas."

Companies from the Middle East will also be on hand. Qatar-based kids specialists JCCTV will be, according to a rep from the company, "Primarily

focused on the new titles we brought to MIPCOM." This will include such series as *Rosie*, *SeeFood*, and *Discover Science* in terms of co-productions. JCC's slate will be rounded out by productions for both preschoolers and the children's market.

Meanwhile, Connecticut-based CABLEReady will be focused on its crime and lifestyle programming, as well as launching its entertainment-driven Reelz Channel in HD. Sales rep Tatiana Figueiredo said, "My goal is to get to know a lot of new clients and expand our business on free TV and on the local level." Among the shows that Figueiredo will be promoting are crime series *Forensic Files* and *Women Behind Bars*, as well as new travel series *Way of Life*.

Jene Elzie, VP, International Sales & Strategic Planning for Comcast International Media Group outlined some of the challenges that Western companies face going into ATF. "Censorship is the most relevant issue of concern for most of Asia, especially in Singapore and Malaysia," she said. "We also have to consider content that is deemed 'too American' or not culturally relevant for this market." In addition, Elzie noted that executives should remain aware of the effects of the global financial crisis.



VideoAge's presence at ATF

Challenges aside, Elzie and company are headed to ATF with a packed slate, topped by new E! titles *What's Eating You* and *Bridalplasty*, as well as Style Network's *Mel B.: It's a Scary World*. Elzie has high hopes for the market, remarking that across Asia, "There is an increasing popularity of Hollywood TV dramas like *Lost*, *CSI* and *Gossip Girl* at the expense of Hollywood films, so complementary programming such as E! Specials, which focus on globally famous stars of these TV dramas, will generate buyer interest."

As usual, ATF 2010 will have a host of seminars on offer, in addition to networking events and business lounges. Market organizer Reed Exhibitions has announced a partnership with The Asia Pacific Media Alliance for Social Awareness to put on this year's Media Leader's Forum, which will tackle the topic of climate change and its portrayal in the media. Additionally, it has been revealed that gatherings will include an Opening Party and a variety of networking lunches, as well as an ATF Buyer's Club and Participant's Club to facilitate buying and selling opportunities. ●



RSI's Beatrice Grossmann at ATF



KOCCA's Choon Keun Lee



Rob Gilby of Disney Media Distribution



Robert Chua, chairman of Hong Kong-based Health and Lifestyle Channel

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Japan 3D to Holographic TV

(Continued from Cover)

Reportedly, NHK has earmarked the equivalent of U.S.\$4.3 billion for development and is sponsoring research at companies such as Sony and Mitsubishi. It has also dispatched engineers to the U.S., where scientists have already generated basic holographic transmissions. Plus, Japan's National Institute of Information and Communications Technologies demonstrated crude electronic holography at the NAB show last year.

Keio University's Jun Murai, a scientist known as "the father of the Japanese Internet," is advising NHK. Using holographic broadcasting over satellites, he's quoted as saying, "football matches held in Tokyo could be relayed to any stadium in the world where full-sized players would appear so life-like that fans would believe they were at the match." A Sony engineer explained that a football field would resemble a large book laid on the house floor. Lasers would then project the cloud into the middle of the room. With wires running under the carpet, you could fill the room with a football match.

But, so far, both technologies are still flawed. The no-glasses 3-D models produce out-of-focus images from certain angles and distances, and holographic broadcast is still called "Star Wars technology," after a scene in the 1977 movie where a holographic image of Princess Leia is projected from the robot R2-D2.

On the economic front, Japan's "Great Deflation" still perseveres. In a recent *New York Times* article, a businessman is quoted as saying: "I've been waiting for 20 years for inflation to come back." For nearly a generation now, the nation has been trapped in a downward spiral of prices, known as deflation. Consumers, especially young people, are reluctant to buy items like new cars or the latest television sets. Problems are more visible in areas like Osaka, the third-largest city, than in Tokyo, the country's major city. It's estimated that by the time this generation hits retirement age, its habits of frugality will have cost the Japanese economy the equivalent of U.S.\$420 billion in lost consumption. "These guys think it's stupid to spend," a businessman stated in the *Times*' report. And this could well represent a lesson to the world. Indeed, economists are now warning of "Japanification," or a state in which consumers refuse to buy, corporations hold back on investments and banks sit on piles of cash.



Trans World Associates' Masa Omiya

As the *Times* stated, few nations in recent history have seen such a striking reversal of economic fortune as Japan. Indeed, in the 1980s and early 1990s the so-called Japan Inc. seemed ready to obliterate whole American industries, gobbling up Hollywood studios such as Columbia Pictures (purchased in 1989 by Sony) and Universal Studios (acquired by Matsushita in 1990 and subsequently sold to Canada's Seagram in 1995).

Today, China has overtaken Japan to become the world's number two economy. Nonetheless, with a TV advertising market equivalent to U.S.\$19 billion per year, Japan is still the world's second largest television ad market, after the U.S. However, despite its size, Japan ranks sixth in the license fees paid for imported theatrical movies and seventh in the world for TV products.

Of the imported fare, broadcasters prefer U.S. studio movies for which they can pay up to \$4 million for the free TV window (studios manage both the theatrical release and DVD sales themselves). In recent years, in order to lower that license fee, broadcasters have been negotiating lower numbers of runs. Besides theatrical movies, foreign TV programs acquired in Japan are mostly TV movies and footage to include in local productions.

In any case, because of the abundance of local production (NHK alone invests \$6 billion a year on production), demand for imported programs is very low; estimated at between three and five percent of the broadcast schedules. Cable and satellite TV present better opportunities for foreign product, but the license fee offered is relatively modest, in the order of \$3,000 to \$15,000 per hour. In addition, outside co-production deals, it's difficult to sell directly even to cable-satellite channels and most international sellers utilize local distributors like Tohokushinsha and Trans World Associates. But the major local program distributors are the broadcasters themselves (NHK, NTV, TBS, Fuji-TV, TV Asahi and TV Tokyo for broadcast television), while the pay-TV market is shared among Jupiter,

Tohokushinsha and Wowow.

On the DVD front there are: Kadokawa, Pony Canyon, King Records and Geneon-Universal.

At times, Japanese distributors buy territorial rights that include Japan and South Korea. For this latter territory, rights are either re-sold to local distributors or sold directly by the same Japanese companies.

Drama, or *dorama* as they say in Japan, is a very popular TV genre. Dramas broadcast on Fuji-TV and TBS are usually the most popular. TV Asahi focuses on period drama and crime series. Recently, one of NHK's dramas, *Goldfish*, won the Grand Prix award at Prix Italia, the Italian TV festival sponsored by RAI.

Television is very popular in the country, and 95 percent of Japanese people watch television every day. On average the Japanese watch more than three hours a day, mostly the six national terrestrial networks (two from public broadcaster NHK) and the local TV Tokyo. TV networks serve about 49 million TVHH for a population of 127 million people — mainly concentrated within 13 key TV markets — through station affiliates. With 30 TV stations, NTV has the largest number of affiliates. TBS and Fuji-TV have 28 TV affiliates each, all digital. All analog TV

broadcasts are scheduled to end by July 2011.

Ratings are measured in four time slots: All day (6 am-12 am), prime time (7 pm-11 pm), golden time (7 pm-10 pm) and non-prime time.

NHK, which tends to reach older viewers, is financed with a mandatory TV license fee equivalent to U.S.\$191 a year for the two terrestrial channels, and \$314 for a package that includes NHK's three satellite services. This license fee generates a steady revenue stream of close to \$8.4 billion per year. In comparison, the commercial TV sector is struggling with lower income and even losses. Last year, revenues for TBS were \$4.5 billion, NTV \$4 billion, Fuji-TV \$4 billion (Fuji-TV also operates three premium TV channels).

With its tightly-packed cities, Japan has among the highest penetration of fiber-optic connections in the world. Cable and satellite subscribers, together with those with broadband, are over 14.1 million TVHH, of which some six million are satellite TV subs. Of these, over 58.3 percent are Sky Perfect JSat (or simply Sky Perfect) subscribers. Other large satellite TV platforms include Wowow, Japan's first private satellite pay-TV service with 2.5 million subs.

On the cable front, Jupiter Telecommunications (J:Com) — the largest cable TV operator serving about 2.5 million TVHH with some 70 TV channels, including four pay-TV sports channels — was recently acquired by KDDI, the nation's second largest telecom operator that alone serves 5.8 million Japanese households and owns Cablenet, the country's second largest cable TV service.

Japan doesn't have an equivalent of the FCC, the U.S. telecommunications authority. The task comes under the jurisdiction of Telecom Ministry, which cannot really deal with television; therefore, consolidation and other standards are considered rather "loose." ●



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Virtual TV Trade Shows

(Continued from Cover)

The TV trade show business has indeed leveraged this "emotional" aspect, and it has evolved over the years into four key international markets a year: NATPE, MIP-TV, L.A. Screenings and MIPCOM, plus two secondary if specialized markets, AFM (for movies) and ATF (for Asia).

Some industry executives, though, consider these four annual appointments unnecessary, and six far too many. For others, however, especially those who don't have foreign offices, the more gatherings there are, the merrier, even though each market has its costs and can be expensive. Invariably, all program distributors tend to pay personal visits to buyers, which they say effectively reduces the need for more program trade shows.

An additional factor has emerged with the advent of the Internet, which allows videoconferencing to conduct negotiations, streaming media to screen new programs and an abundance of information about the new shows. The Internet, however, cannot create relationships, but can only foster them.

Nonetheless, due to the fact that the Internet exists and has taken such a big role in business, it is natural that it would come up with alternatives to the "brick-and-mortar" (real, physical or in-person) trade shows with "virtual" (or Internet-based) events.

Internet-based trade shows were first talked about nine years ago. Today there are five major platform providers that develop virtual-meetings software, two of which are headquartered in California: Unisfair and ON24 — this in addition to Linden Lab's Second Life, which is consumer-oriented, and more than a B2B virtual event is a "virtual world."

According to the Massachusetts-based Champion Exposition Services' 2010 exhibitor trends survey, virtual events are gaining acceptance, with 24 percent



ON24's Mark Szelenyi

of exhibitors surveyed finding them valuable and four percent very valuable, while 44 percent found them a little valuable and 28 percent not valuable.

In our case, a virtual trade show has to replicate the "feel" a participant experiences at a real event: Walking in the convention aisles; stopping for information at an exhibitor's booth; the screening of a particular program and sitting down to negotiate the licensee fee.

From exhibitors' and visitors' point of view, virtual trade shows mainly benefit companies with small traveling budgets; people that missed some traditional gatherings, and those who would rather look for an abundance of material on a single website, rather than take on the time-consuming task of searching through various companies' sites.

From the trade show organizers' side, associations tend to use the virtual format to set up shows that they otherwise can't afford. In addition, virtual trade shows can take advantage of a worldwide universe and reach below the top-strata that are usually allowed to attend in-person trade shows. Indeed, global reach is one of the biggest pluses of virtual shows. But there are cons. Naturally, virtual shows don't make sense for localized events. Networking opportunities are limited. There are no face-to-face meetings or serendipitous run-ins with customers. Participants can't get goodies or go to parties.

On the other hand, the Washington

DC-based Satellite Broadcasting and Communications Association (SBCA) stopped having its SkyFORUM trade show in the physical form two years ago, reportedly because attendance had dropped. It was revived virtually in November 2009. Produced by Unisfair, this year, SBCA's virtual trade event was held November 17 and lasted from 11:00 am to 7:00 pm live, but remained available for 90 days to replay. It featured 12 conferences (webinars) and 15 exhibitors, such as DirecTV and DISH Network, which took advantage of packages that started at \$1,500 and up. SkyFORUM was free to attend and 1,000 individuals paid a visit online and were able to download product info and see demos. For questions after the live segments, attendees were able to contact exhibitors via e-mail. A tracking system within the platform allowed exhibitors to see who visited and if they repeated. The official language was English, but there was a translator system for visitors who speak other languages.

Another TV-related virtual show was organized last January 20, by the Washington D.C.-based National Association of Broadcasters, called "DigitalVision 2010." It utilized a platform from ON24 and offered 20 virtual exhibitors for a one-day visit.

Last year ON24 developed about 300 virtual shows, compared with 50 in 2008. Overall, in 2010 there were an estimated 700 Internet-based trade events worldwide.

According to ON24's Mark Szelenyi, the world's economic downturn helped the growth of virtual trade shows, and now that the economy is rebounding, organizations that are going back to physical trade events — having experienced the advantages — are incorporating a virtual element into their shows. In this case the event is called a "hybrid," and one such hybrid is sponsored by the American Society of Association Executives. The business model of hybrid shows varies: Some charge an extra fee to exhibit in the virtual environment, others use the virtual setting to entice exhibitors to buy space in the physical trade show. Plus, virtual show organizers can offer, for an extra fee, online booths with the opportunity for live chat. The virtual trade fair can also provide live interaction on a one-to-one, one-to-few, one-to-many and many-to-many basis.

According to SBCA's Amy Hager, the cost of putting on a virtual trade show can range from \$40,000 to \$100,000, excluding the cost of marketing. ON24's Szelenyi explained that, on average, one can calculate costs as \$30 per visitor or \$25,000 for a five-exhibitor virtual event with a one-day live show and a three-month replay. Naturally, the number of exhibitors, the amount of information, the duration of the live event and the length of the replay all have an effect on costs.

A platform provider needs 12 weeks to set up a virtual event. Participants have to simply provide all the necessary information online.

The market for technology companies that develop virtual shows is now estimated at about \$100 million per year.

As a case study there is the 2008 event staged by Cisco, a San Jose, California-based technology company that decided to transform some of its internal gatherings into virtual trade shows called "Cisco Live Virtual." The cyber version came with a two-tier business model: The free, limited access and the Premiere Access, which cost \$395 (about 19 percent of the registration cost at the real show).

But, after all is said and done, traditional trade fairs remain the industry's bread and butter. According to the Massachusetts-based Champion Exposition Services' 2010 exhibitor trends survey, 51 percent of exhibitors surveyed indicated that they'll participate in more trade shows when the economy recovers, while 36 percent plan on sending more staff to trade shows. About 24 percent will increase exhibit square footage and 23 percent will increase advertising onsite/at show.

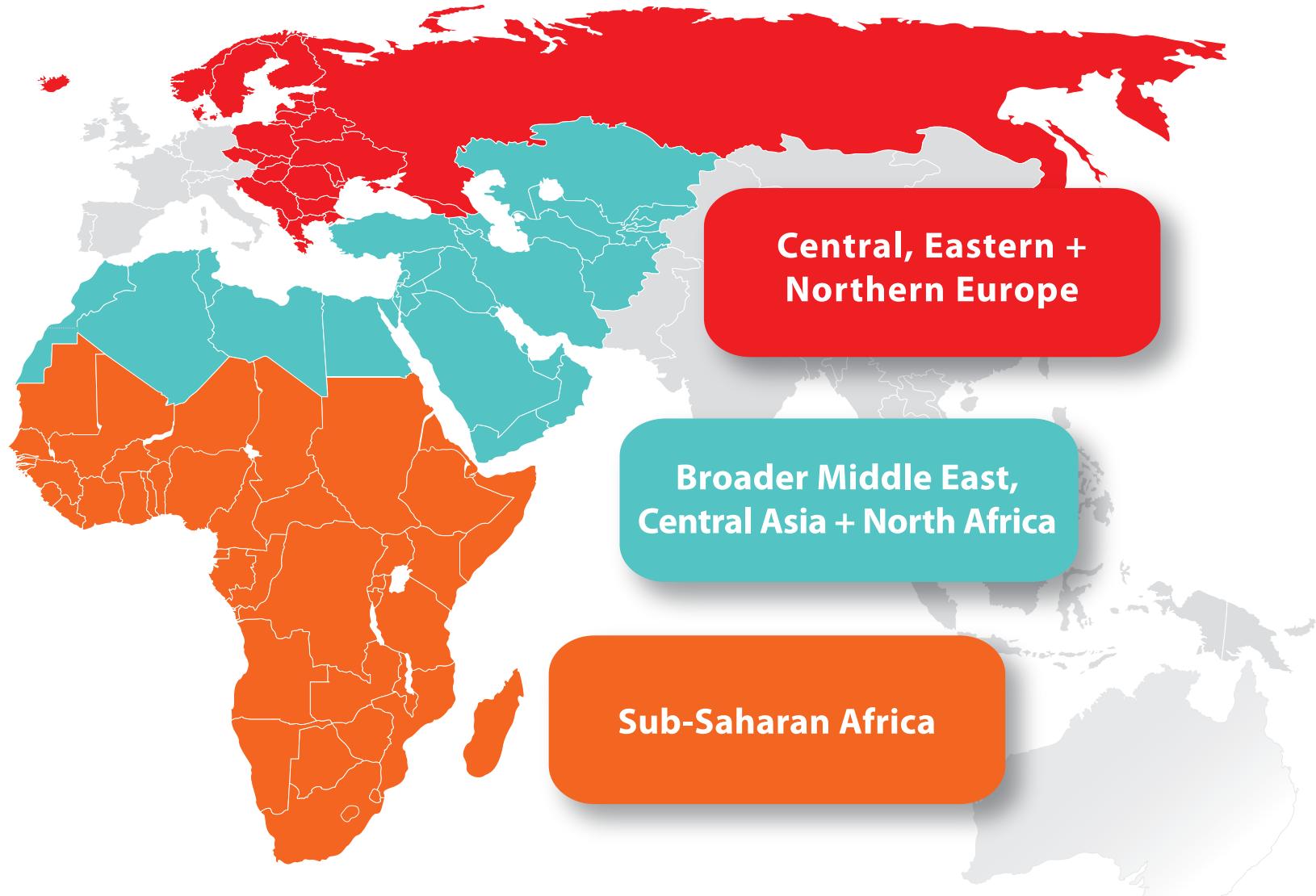
Trade shows remain a very significant part of the marketing mix and 62 percent of exhibitors report that trade show expenditures represent more than a quarter of their marketing budget — including 28 percent of exhibitors who indicated trade shows represent more than half of their marketing budget. While collecting leads (79 percent) and creating brand awareness (75 percent) are the top goals, exhibitors pursue a range of other goals as well, with 21 percent seeking the immediate return of selling. Also, 33 percent of exhibitors use trade shows to launch new products. ●



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Conferences & Events News

AIRLINES 2, PASSENGERS 0

In the running matches between airlines and passengers, the latter lost another game, two to nil. According to the International Air Transport Assoc. (IATA), the actual profit expected in 2010 by the airline sector is \$8.9 billion. This is upwards of last June's estimate of \$2.5 billion and from an expected \$2.8 billion in losses. One wonders if those expected losses were invented in order to squeeze passengers even more. IATA attributes the increased profit to "capacity management, stabilized operational costs and revenue recovery," which, translated, means fewer flights, more passengers per flight and more incidental costs. The airlines scored again against passengers with airfare increases for 2011 by 3.81 percent on international routes and 4.48 percent for travel within the United States.

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Television will surely change, and not because of 3D or social media, but for other reasons, like IPTV. The unique thing is that this change will not be driven by the current television industry leadership, but by an organic development.

For sure, the role of TV will change: Television will become solely an entertainment medium and the Internet (or Web) an information outlet. In turn, this information outlet will be split into multiple parts for gossip, hard news, commentary, social, political and religious activities, search engines, communications and talent scouting. These are all activities easily relegated to a computer, smart phone or iPod.

However, when people want to be entertained, they'll still run to their large-screen TV sets. Viewers simply cannot enjoy watching a football match, a fascinating series or a great movie from a computer or from the screen of a smart phone. And the trend is clear: TV sets are becoming bigger and bigger, while hand-held devices are getting smaller and smaller, possibly anticipating what I call "The Videovision."

Therefore, I do not agree with two statements found in the U.K.'s Royal Television Society's official publication, *Television*. First, that "The traditional television broadcast model is simply not compatible with the social lifestyle preferred by the new generation." Second, that "Quality is no longer defined by production values, but is determined by relevance."

As mentioned above, the traditional television broadcast model will indeed change, not because of social media, but in the sense that it will depart from the current "appointment television" to "videovision on demand," thanks to IPTV. Subsequently, the business model will expand from today's advertising-based, and (for U.S. TV stations) retrans fee structures into a three-tier model that will include pay-per-view, premium viewing and advertising.

And this new business model is strictly associated with programming quality, while "relevance" will be important mainly for the social media.

In this new videovision broadcast model, viewers will be given the opportunity to preview big productions by simply subscribing to the service and viewing them without commercials. The free broadcast services window supported by advertising will follow the premium service. Finally, for those who did not subscribe to the premium service or missed the free broadcast, there will be the video-on-demand window (with commercials) at, let's say, \$1 per show. In effect, videovision stations will be able to make money even after their live signals are gone.

Because of IPTV this new broadcast model is extremely easy to implement via TV sets' remote controls and utilizing credit cards or pre-paid debit cards. Gone are re-transmission fees, since broadcast videovision will no longer need cable or satellite to retransmit its signal. The only thing this new model will need is universal broadband, in whatever form is available or desired (cable, DSL, power-lines, satellite or Wi-Fi).

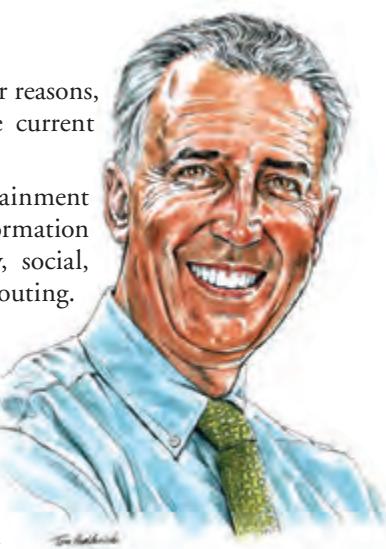
The additional and interesting aspect of this evolution is that, not needing the spectrum to broadcast, videovision networks will be able to use

their electromagnetic frequencies to provide Wi-Fi/Wi-Max and thus create for themselves a fourth revenue tier (if authorities will not be able to separate transport providers from content).

In effect, with the new business model, videovision stations, outside the U.S., will be able to monetize all aspects of their operations, even those, like spectrum, that now are non-performing assets that cost money to maintain and by themselves don't generate income.

But this new and inevitable videovision model has to rely completely on the high quality of its programming. The Internet/Web can be of low-quality and still be amusing, videovision can only be of high-quality and entertaining. We all noticed that even today's generation — that can program a computer and set up a smart phone without looking at the 300 or so pages of instruction manuals — when comes to entertainment, also wants the luxury of the big screen and the pleasure of high-quality programming.

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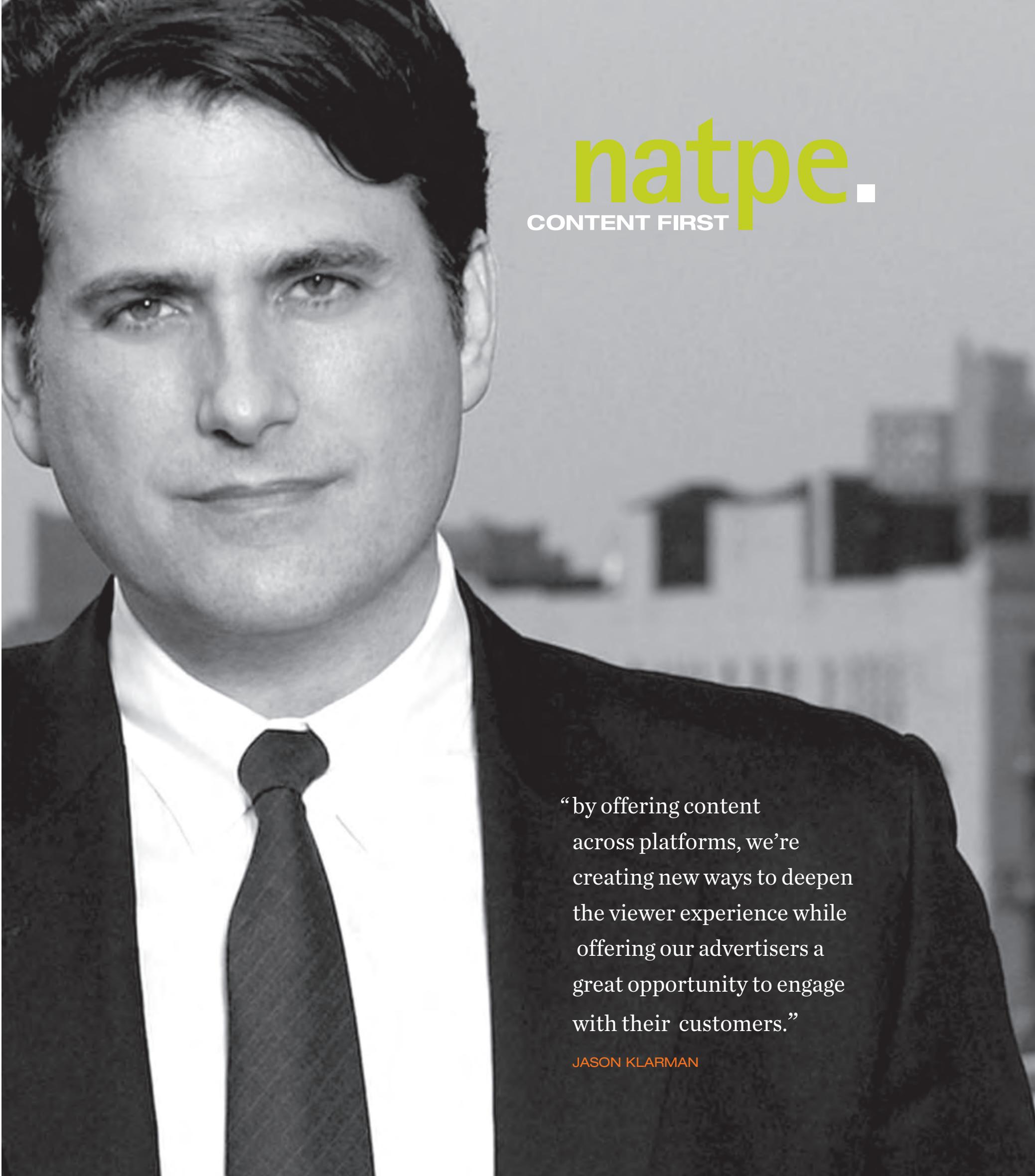
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